The Southern PATRIOT

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THE FALLACY OF "MODERATION"

The term "moderation" is enjoying a vogue in present-day political polemnics. Since it implies sobriety, balance and caution it has a certain appeal to the public mind. But there is one shortcoming in the word, as it is generally used: "Moderation" seems to become an end in itself, without any indication of what is going to be done moderately.

In the growing national concern over racial conditions in the South, President Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson have counseled "moderation" and expressed disapproval of "extremists on both sides." Similarly, Southern editors and politicians have asked that the region be "let alone" so that the "moderates" can restore harmony.

But of what does this "moderation" consist? What is the program of the "moderates"? Neither Eisenhower nor Stevenson have offered more than exhortation to "understanding." Hodding Carter recently undertook the role of Southern "moderate" on a national television program. He stressed the improvements that have been made in Negro schools during the past few years and implied that if segregation were to continue, Negro educational facilities would eventually be equal to those of the whites. One might conclude rather tartly that "moderation" on racial issues consists of platitudes based on long-discredited assumptions.

However, "moderation" would not necessarily be a hindrance to progress did not its adherents proclaim themselves to be standing between "extremists on both sides." Who are the "extremists" in this case? Presumably those who advocate defiance of the Supreme Court are extremists on one side. But then—and here is the rub—the Supreme Court must be the extremists on the other.

"Moderates," of course, dare not face this logic. To do so would be to destroy their position, for there is not even the point of a pin to stand on in being anti-Supreme Court ruling and anti-anti-Supreme Court ruling simultaneously. So what they do is focus their sights on those organizations which are seeking to have the court decision implemented and made a reality in the South. The NAACP, the SCEF, and even the Southern Regional Council are being portrayed—explicitly or by implication—as firebrands when they simply ask local school boards to proceed "with deliberate speed" toward integration. In Louisiana, when a three-judge federal court declared that the New Orleans school board should begin desegregation, the NAACP offered its assistance in working out a program. But the board bluntly asserted its determination to keep segregation and announced plans to appeal. Where, in this situation, can one possibly find two extremists?

The "moderates" keep quiet while Dixiecrats rave about anti-segregation organizations being "subversive," while a retired Georgia educator is threatened with loss of pension because of participation in an interracial council, while South Carolina declares that NAACP membership makes one ineligible for state employment. They do nothing to correct statements by such public bodies as the Montgomery, Ala., county grand jury that it is the "NAACP attack on segregation" which threatens state laws and mores. The nine unanimous justices are the forgotten men of the "moderate" outlook.

The fact is that the Supreme Court decision itself was truly moderate in the terms set forth for its execution. Any attempt to "moderate" the ruling further becomes a fruitless, positively deleterious gesture.

Catholics Take Firm Integration Stand in La.

In Louisiana the Catholic Church has reiterated firmly its opposition to segregation, despite the protests of various laymen and despite the attempts of state and local officials to engender an atmosphere of racist hysteria.

On Feb. 26 Archbishop Joseph F. Rummel urged Catholics to "strive to accept the teachings of the church" regarding racial equality and said—in a clear promise that he does not intend to back down—that Catholic doctrine "will be exposed more in days to come."

The prelate spoke at an unsegregated meeting where Hulan E. Jack, first Negro ever to become president of the Manhattan borough of New York, made the major address.

At the same time an editorial appearing in the official newspaper **Catholic Action** declared that legislators who sought to enforce segregation in parochial schools would be leaving themselves

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Further Retreats From Reason In Mississippi

There were those who contended that if Mississippi had been "left alone," punishment would have been dealt the murderers of Emmett Till. The acquittal in Sumner, Miss., of a white cotton-gin operator accused of killing a Negro shakes this contention.

Three eye-witnesses—including a white man—disputed the defendant's claim of self-defense; there were no TV cameras or "foreign" reporters hovering about; the NAACP refrained from entering the case. But . . . .

There are those who oppose withholding federal funds from state facilities which practice discrimination. Are they also willing to excuse the firing of two Negro hospital employees in Clarksdale, Miss., on account of their membership in the NAACP and their signing of a school desegregation petition? The hospital concerned—the Coahoma County Hospital—receives federal money under the Hill-Burton Act.

Perhaps as tragic as anything is the rider attached to the appropriation bill for the Mississippi library commission which requires it to purchase $5,000 worth of white-supremacy books. The commission has only $38,000 available for the acquisition of new books of any kind.

In response to demands by legislators in previous years, the library service had stocked up on out-of-print tomes by Bilbo and other racists—some ten to fifty copies of them. Librarians now doubt that they can find enough of these texts on "ethnology" to spend the $5,000.

And as the executive secretary of the commission pointed out: Some 1,218,000 persons—more than half the state's population—have no access to public library services of any kind. One of the commission's major functions has been to supply books to those people by mail. "We have always tried to reflect in our purchases what they want and need—from gardening to philosophy," the secretary said, adding that never has the demand for white-supremacy books been such as to merit the proposed expansion.

An ironic solution might be for the librarians of Jones County, Miss., to turn over to the impoverished state service the books that are going to be yanked

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BOYCOTT LEADER DESCRIBES FIGHT FOR RACIAL EQUITY

E. D. Nixon is a tall, lean, meditative man who is a sleeping-car porter by profession. His run is from his home town, Montgomery, to Chicago. He is president of his local union. He is past president of the Alabama NAACP and a board member of the SCEF. He is one of the leaders of the 4-month-old transit boycott in Montgomery—indeed, many declare that he conceived the idea that captured the imagination of 40,000 long-suffering Negro residents of the "Cradle of the Confederacy."

But he does not consider the boycott anybody's personal property. Speaking for his fellow officers of the protest movement's strategy board, he said: "We couldn't stop it now if we wanted to. I wouldn't go before the people and ask them to give up. They'd tear me apart." Fifteen years of mistreatment by bus drivers built up the resentment that led to the mass protest; threats and wholesale arrests have created a determination to gain total victory.

"It all could have been avoided if the bus company and the city commission would have agreed to sit down at a table and give in a little. Now, only if the bus company agrees—in writing—to seat everybody on a first-come, first-served basis will the people get back on the buses."

The city commission of Montgomery has joined the White Citizens Council and pledged itself not to mediate the dispute. Discussing possible action by Negro voters against them, Nixon was asked what effect the situation had had on Negroes' efforts to register.

He told of his battle to get the vote himself, describing how a cold-blooded quota system still limits the Negro's exercise of the ballot:

"Up until 1944 the Negro couldn't vote in the Democratic primary in Alabama. For ten years before that I tried to register to vote, anyway. I tried three, four, six times a year—and finally took them to court before they let me on the books. I said in my suit that they had a quota system for registering Negroes. They denied it, of course, but they did—and they still do, sure as my name is Nixon.

"Last year 3,000 tried to register and not more than 250 got accepted. What they do is have you answer 21 questions when you apply—questions anybody with any education can answer. But if you're a Negro they tell you your application have to be processed and that if you don't hear from them in a couple of days it means you haven't passed. A white person is signed on the spot. We have only 2,000 Negro voters in the whole county, at the outside." Montgomery county has a population of about 200,000—40% of which is Negro.

Nixon was asked if the growth of the White Citizens Councils and the violence at the University of Alabama, as well as the bomb tossed at Nixon's own home in February, didn't perhaps show that the Southern white is dead set on keeping his racial prejudices. "Traditions don't change by themselves," he said emphatically. "You've got to change them. The South will never be free until the Negro is able to free himself and then set the Southern white man free."

And how are you going to get the Southern white to understand that idea? "Show them," he said. "They just don't know how much they're losing by letting big business tell them they don't need high wages because they have the Negro who'll be their servant for a few pennies. Why, I was sitting on my front porch one day when this white fellow, a meter reader, comes by and asks how many bricks I have in my house. I told him. He asks if I own the house. I said yes. He didn't believe me, so I ask him how much he makes on his job. He said $175 a month. I told him I made better than twice that. He didn't believe me again. I told him he was a fool.

"There was some construction work going on down the street—a union job. I knew some of the guys. So I took this white man down there and called one of the Negro dump truck drivers over. 'How much do you make a day?' '$14.50,' he said. Well, the white man just walked off, shaking his head. He said he was going to quit the job he had, and I guess he must have, because I didn't see him again."

Did he think the meter reader's ideas about Negroes had been changed? Nixon said, "No. It was just a start." He said Negroes and whites would have to come to work together in unions, in true equality, not with Negroes shunted off into non-voting "auxiliaries." He told of the Montgomery bricklayers local, where Negroes had obtained the charter and whites had to apply to them for membership. The local held unsegregated meetings and banquets and got along fine, he said. And then he told this story:

"I was asked to talk before these workers at a creosote plant—a mixed group—where one white man was holding back the drive to get them in the union. I knew about this fellow, that he lived in a cheap house with blocks under it and a privy in the back and a dirt road in the front. His children had to walk a long ways to get to school. So I used it against him. I told him, in front of the audience at the meeting, that if the boss set so much store on his white skin he'd pay him enough to let him live in a decent house in a good neighborhood. Being white ain't worth a damn when you're hungry.

"That fellow got up and said, 'Yes, by God, I've been the one stopping the union. And I never thought I'd see the day when a n---r would convince me to join. Where are the cards?' That night they got a union."

How does Nixon feel about the situation in Alabama generally? "I feel hopeful. This boycott is the best thing that ever happened. It has shown the world what is going on down here. I can't say what will come of it, but I can say this: I've been fighting for 20 years—I'm almost disappointed when a week goes by without getting a threat on my life—but I'll be fighting still, even if nobody isn't saying a word but me."

The conviction of Rev. M. L. King on charges of leading a boycott in Montgomery, Ala., has naturally shifted public interest to the task of raising funds for appeal to higher courts.

But it should also be remembered that the car pool operated by the Montgomery Improvement Assn. has to keep rolling day after day—its considerable expenses in gas and oil being further enlarged by traffic tickets from police who are making Negro drivers "drive by the book."

Contributions to the operating fund of the boycotters can be addressed to: Montgomery Improvement Assn., c/o E. D. Nixon, treasurer, 647 Clinton St., Montgomery, Ala.

Seniority Forever

The elevation of Senator James O. Eastland to chairmanship of the Senate Judiciary Committee is an event that beggars description or comment. Perhaps the New York **Times**, which like the SCEF has had occasion to know the mettle of the man first-hand, put the matter most incisively:

"Some excellent legislators . . . upheld the Eastland appointment on the ground that there is no good substitute for the seniority rule . . .

"Maybe there is no easy substitute for seniority. There is no substitute for wisdom, either. There is no substitute for faith in the American system of democracy. If something has to give way it had better be seniority."

3 IMPORTANT PAMPHLETS OFFERED

Three interesting and important pamphlets on school integration are now available. They describe how Baltimore, St. Louis and Washington, D. C., successfully desegregated their school systems

Their titles are: "Desegregation in the Baltimore City Schools," issued by the Maryland Commission on Interracial Problems and Relations; "Saint Louis Integrates Its Schools," by the St. Louis League of Women Voters, and "The Right of Every Child" by the American Friends Service Committee.

Because these three cities have Negro populations which exceed those of many Deep South locales, the detailed description of school board and community procedure have wide interest. One striking paragraph from the Baltimore report declares:

"Only a very small proportion of the white teachers and principals indicated in advance of desegregation that they considered their groups prepared to conduct integrated school programs . . . . A majority indicated their belief that some type of in-service training or re-education was necessary to achieve maximum success in integrated schools . . . While the sampling was small and not especially scientific, the results suggest that 'readiness' for integration is not something which can be induced and that teachers may be better prepared for a change than they themselves realize."

The SCEF is offering these pamphlets to any reader who writes for them. Also, to groups in the South who may wish to hear them, the SCEF has available tape-recordings of speeches made before the New Orleans Citizens Forum on Integration by speakers from those three cities: Rev. Allen Hackett, St. Louis; Dr. Margaret Butcher, Washington, D. C.; Dr. Thomas A. Van Sant, Baltimore. The tapes run approximately an hour and a half each.

Persons interested in the pamphlets and/or tape recordings should write: SCEF, Room 404, 822 Perdido Street, New Orleans, La.

Books in Brief

THE STRANGE CAREER OF JIM CROW, by C. VANN WOODWARD, Oxford University Press, N.Y.C., $2.50.

Most people do not know that Jim Crow has a history, and are unaware that the laws disfranchising Negroes and establishing separate facilities are of recent origin. Most of these statutes were passed in the 15-year period 1895-1910. You will understand what is happening today much better after you have read this slender volume of only 152 pages by a distinguished Southern historian now at John Hopkins University.

THE STORY OF THE NEGRO, by ARNA BONTEMPS, illustrated by RAYMOND LAFKIN, Alfred A. Knopf, N.Y., $3.00.

Further evidence that *fact* can be just as absorbing as *fiction*. This history, from earliest time to the present, was written originally for young people, but is appropriate for everyone.

PREJUDICE AND YOUR CHILD. What you can do about it, by KENNETH CLARK, $2.50.

FRATERNITIES WITHOUT BROTHERHOOD, A campus report on social and religious prejudice, by ALFRED MCCLUNG LEE, $1.95.

CITIZENS GUIDE TO DESEGREGATION, A study of social and legal change in American Life, by HERBERT HILL and JACK GREENBERG, $1.45.

Three useful new books for your library on human relations, published by the Beacon Press, 25 Beacon Street, Boston 8, Mass.

A MANUAL OF INTERGROUP RELATIONS, by JOHN P. DEAN and ALEX ROSEN, University of Chicago Press, $3.75.

This book brings together the distilled wisdom and experience of many persons skilled in the field of human relations. It will be helpful to everyone seeking to reduce discrimination and segregation in their organizations and community.

Dixie 'Manifesto' Disregards Facts

The "Declaration of Constitutional Principles" signed by 19 Southern senators and 77 representatives was a document of pure political expediency. The best that can be hoped of it is that no one takes seriously its talk of "naked judicial power," "outside agitators," and "chaos and confusion in the state directly affected."

The declaration made no positive suggestions. What is worse it did not accurately appraise the situation in the South they presumed to speak for. They did not consider:

1) An estimated 2,000 Negro students are attending formerly all-white colleges and universities in eight Southern states. Half of the state-supported institutions of higher learning—104—in 17 Southern and border states have integrated.

2) According to **Southern School News**, approximately 256,000 Negro school children—ten per cent of the total Negro enrollment in 17 Southern and border states—are in "integrated situations."

3) A Gallup Poll survey published March 1 indicates that 55 per cent of the whites in the South believe "the day will come" for complete integration of the races. Only 33 per cent said No. (Among Negroes the replies were 70 per cent affirmative, 15 per cent no.

No one need read the congressional declaration twice to see that the philosophy expressed is akin to White Citizens Council doctrine. And the congressmen would do well to study the story appearing in the New York Times of March 14 which points out that racial tension is causing "hesitation on the part of several large industrial companies to open new facilities in the South."

Leonard Yaseen of Fantus Factory

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Catholics

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open to automatic excommunication.

Emile A. Wagner, Jr., member of the Orleans Parish school board and Catholic layman, countered by deploring Jack's appearance at the church forum, citing the latter's "record" in the files of the House Un-American Activities Committee. Later, on March 17, Wagner announced he was going to serve as president of a sort of Catholic White Citizens Council—a group open only to Catholics of "the Caucasian race" which would study the problems of "compulsory integration" and expose "Communist influence" in integration movements.

On the state level, Louisiana attorney general Fred S. LeBlanc sought to invoke an old anti-KKK law to force dissolution of the NAACP. The law, which has not been enforced since the twenties, requires virtually every type of organization to file membership lists.

And, on March 20, the Citizens Forum on Integration held its third meeting in New Orleans. This is the group whose initial efforts to present a sympathetic discussion of school problems met bitter resistance and pressure from school board officials and super-patriots, (see the SP for December, 1955). Speaker at the forum was Thomas A. Van Sant of the Baltimore department of education.